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SPECIAL PURPOSE FORCES:  
ORIGINS AND OPERATIONS  
IN WORLD WAR II

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**SOVIET NAVAL SPECIAL PURPOSE FORCES: ORIGINS AND OPERATIONS  
IN WORLD WAR II**

**by**

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# Soviet Naval Special Purpose Forces: Origins and Operations in World War II

## INTRODUCTION

Soviet naval special purpose forces have been highly visible over the past several years, both in the Western military press and, some contend, in Western territorial waters.<sup>1</sup> Published material on this subject, however, tends to contain little analysis of the historical antecedents of current Soviet naval special purpose forces. The neglect of the historical aspects of this topic is not due to any lack of interest, but is instead a result of widespread unfamiliarity with Soviet source materials, few of which have been translated into English.

There exists a large body of historical materials on the World War II special purpose force activities of two of the four Soviet fleets. Included among these materials are contemporary Soviet press accounts, German war diary entries, post-war memoirs, official histories, monographs, and many other secondary sources. Using as many of these sources as are available, this paper will explore the development of special purpose forces in the Northern and Pacific fleets. It will describe the entire repertoire of their combat actions against the Germans in the Far North from 1941—1944, and against the Japanese in northern Korea in August 1945. It concludes with an analytical summary, which clearly establishes these forces as a legitimate precursor of present day Soviet naval spetsnaz.

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHERN FLEET (Map 1)

At the very beginning of the Soviet-German war, Admiral Golovko, the commander of the Northern Fleet, had an urgent need for immediate intelligence on German land forces in northern Norway and Finland. From a start point only ninety kilometers west of his fleet main base at Polyarnyy, north of Murmansk, a German corps-sized force had begun a land offensive on 29 June 1941, with the objective to capture Murmansk, the principle Soviet industrial and port city in the region.<sup>2</sup> Golovko was concerned lest an element split off from the offensive to attack his naval base overland, from the west. He could not be sure that the Soviet Army ground forces defending Murmansk would be able to halt the German offensive, nor could he depend on Army intelligence sources for his daily estimates of enemy locations, capabilities, and intentions.

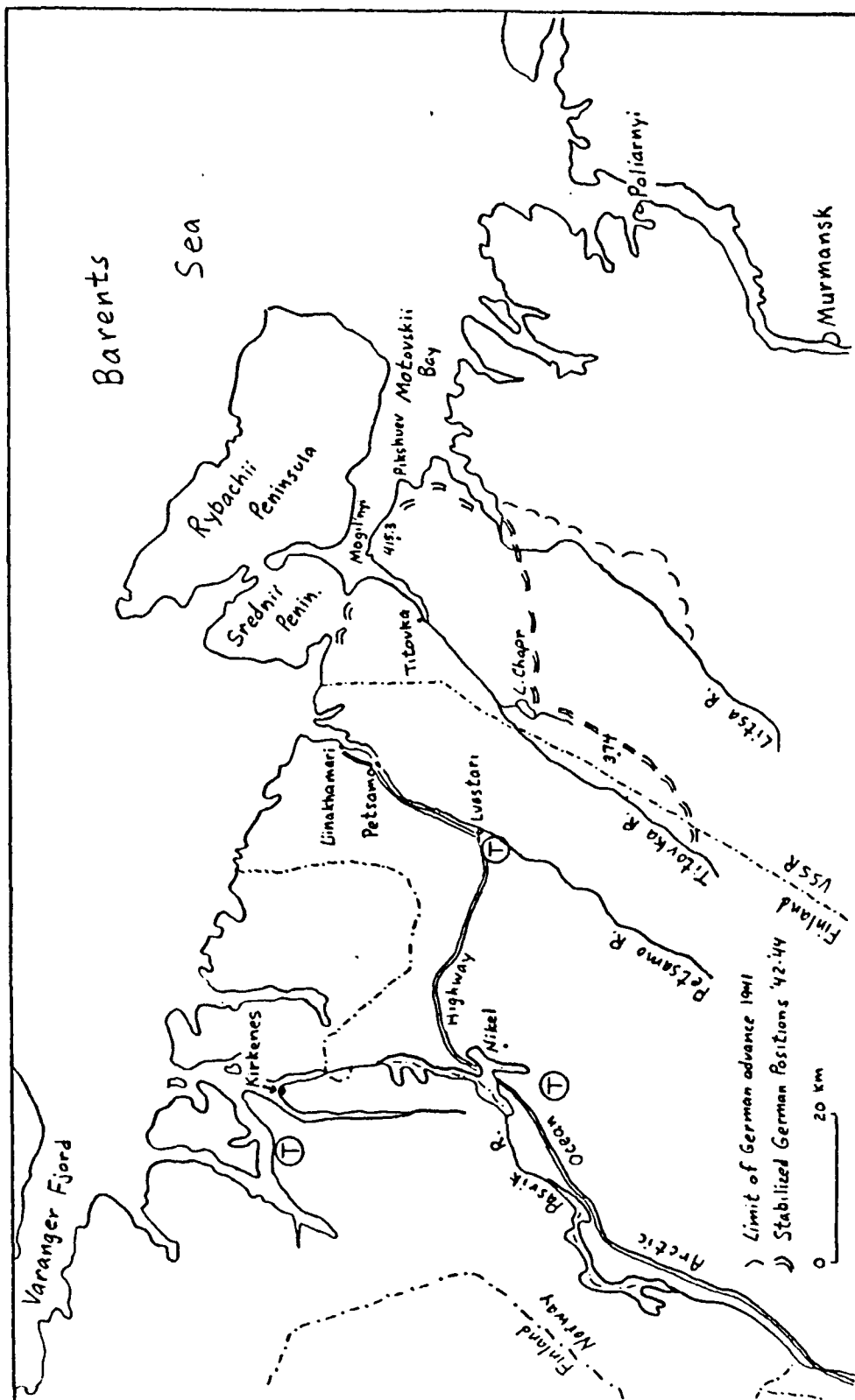
The Northern Fleet also had a forward base on the northern side of Sredniy Peninsula, only thirty kilometers by sea from the German-controlled port of Petsamo. Although Soviet naval ground forces blocked the landward approaches to this base at the narrow Sredniy Isthmus, there was always the possibility that the Germans would launch amphibious operations against Sredniy or Rybachiyy peninsulas, or against Soviet territory farther to the east. Such operations could be launched from Vardo and Vadso on the nearby Varanger Peninsula, as well as from Kirkenes or Petsamo. German air units based at Kirkenes and two forward airfields also were within easy striking range of Polyarnyy and Murmansk. For all these reasons, Admiral Golovko needed his own ground reconnaissance force.

With these problems in mind, in the first days of the German offensive Golovko met with his intelligence staff and assigned tasks, which they worked into a collection plan.<sup>3</sup> The area of immediate concern was the coastline on the left flank of the German offensive. The second area of interest was the German corps rear area, particularly the location of headquarters and lines of communication. The third area of interest was Finnish and Norwegian ports, where the Germans could be gathering the forces necessary for amphibious operations.

The chief of the intelligence section of the fleet was Capt. 3d Rank P. Vizgin, who had served in the same capacity under Golovko when the latter commanded the Amur River Flotilla.<sup>4</sup> Among Vizgin's subordinates were a major, four lieutenants, and an undisclosed number of enlisted men, too few for the immediate assigned tasks. Since all incoming personnel were being assigned to ships and other combat units, the decision was made to recruit volunteers from several sources, including the commercial fleet in Murmansk, civilian and fleet athletic and sports clubs, and the group of Norwegian communists living in the Murmansk area who had fled the German occupation.

The fleet chief of staff, Admiral Kucherov, approved the collection plan, and on 5 July 1941 Admiral Golovko authorized the formation of a ground reconnaissance detachment, with an initial fill of sixty-five to seventy personnel.<sup>5</sup> The detachment's first complement was recruited from among the fleet's athletes. To aid





Map 1  
Marmansk-Kirkenes Sector

in the selection process, Vizgin and Dobrotin sought the assistance of the fleet physical training director, Capt. Domozhirov, who personally knew all the leading athletes. They emphasized to him that they needed two platoons of men, seventy in all, and particularly wanted communists and komsomolists. At the urging of Vizgin and Dobrotin, Domozhirov joined the detachment and become its trainer and leader.

The detachment's first barracks was with the submarine brigade in Polyarnyy, where they would be "cut off from unnecessary eyes."<sup>6</sup> Training began immediately, with the urgency that only impending combat deployment can provide. The detachment was assigned its first combat mission just a week later, to reconnoiter the coastline east of Sredniy Isthmus, and determine if German ground forces had occupied positions along the southern shore of Motovskiy Bay. The detachment deployed on two wooden boats, conducted the mission, and returned to base without enemy contact or casualties.

The detachment quickly reached its initial strength goal of seventy men, and acquired a commissar. The new deputy commander was Intendant 3d rank N. A. Inzartsev, who was previously the chief of the athletic department of the fleet submarine force.<sup>7</sup> Among the personnel recruited to the detachment during this period were Viktor Leonov, who would later become its commander<sup>8</sup>, and Olga Paraeva, a female medic and Finnish interpreter.<sup>9</sup>

While this force trained for and conducted operations in the German tactical depth, Vizgin's staff prepared other smaller groups for deeper penetrations. Vizgin reported to Golovko the readiness of a group of seven men to reconnoiter the Kirkenes area, and Arctic Ocean Highway (German *Eismeerstrasse*), the road from Rovaniemi to Petsamo. He also had a group of eighteen Norwegians training for operations in Norway.<sup>10</sup>

In the detachment's second operation, on 19 July twenty-five men landed from a single boat near the mouth of the Litsa River.<sup>11</sup> Part of the group was to reconnoiter the German encampment at Titovka, while the remainder attacked a strongpoint and captured a prisoner. Both groups were to return to the landing site in three days. Twenty men moved off to the northwest, where several hours later they engaged a German outpost. Three men in the group were killed, and others wounded, but they returned to the shore with a prisoner. The five-man patrol to Titovka returned late, reporting that they did not reach their objective because of the German security forces.

After the initial brief, though successful operations in July, in August the detachment suffered a major defeat. While returning from a successful raid on a Finnish army position near Cape Pikshuev<sup>12</sup>, the detachment was caught in the open sea by six German fighters, and strafed. Eight men were killed, and thirty wounded, over half the detachment's total strength, including some of its most experienced leaders.<sup>13</sup> With Admiral Golovko's support, however, the detachment was reconstituted by mid-August. Among the new personnel was one Lieutenant Frolov, who had served in a ski detachment during the Finnish campaign. Frolov, an accomplished skier, was ordered to establish a ski training program for the detachment, and was sent to Leningrad to recruit other skiers and obtain the needed special equipment.<sup>14</sup>

Training of the newly-arrived personnel included day and night movement techniques in the peculiar terrain of the area, camouflage and concealment skills, the crossing of water obstacles, weapons handling, cross-country skiing, parachuting<sup>15</sup>, and reconnaissance-related skills. The approach of winter necessitated a search for clothing and footwear appropriate for the harsh climate. The items finally adopted reflected careful consultations with the local reindeer herders, as well as the cross-country ski clubs, to select items which were light, warm, durable, and would protect not only men on the move, but also wounded personnel being carried in litters or sleds.

In late August—early September the detachment attempted to mount an operation in cooperation with an army reconnaissance element against the German airfield at Luostari. The army reconnaissance force was as poorly prepared as the naval force was well prepared. Men had been taken from jails in Murmansk, and promised exculpation of their guilt for participation in this mission. Operations security was very poor within the army group, and their physical conditioning was not adequate for the task. Despite all these problems, the joint force managed to penetrate on foot into the objective area, and was only several kilometers from the airfield, when one of the army personnel deserted. Having lost the element of surprise, the commander of the composite force ordered withdrawal and return to base.<sup>16</sup> Although not all joint operations conducted with army or naval infantry forces ended in this manner, the fleet reconnaissance detachment preferred to operate independently.

The German offensive was still moving southeastward, and by the end of August had penetrated to within forty-five kilometers of Murmansk, and only fifty kilometers due west of Polyarnyy.<sup>17</sup> In response to this immediate threat, Admiral Golovko committed his untested 12th Naval Infantry Brigade. To fill some of the lower-level leadership positions with combat-experienced personnel, Golovko ordered Vizgin to provide eighty to ninety of his men. Vizgin was able to hold back only his ski detachments and the groups being prepared for insertion into Norway.<sup>18</sup>

As the German offensive spent itself against hastily formed and committed Soviet formations, Admiral Golovko and Capt. 3d Rank Vizgin began to plan the subsequent operations of the reconnaissance detachment. In September Golovko acquired a renewed interest in German activities in their Norwegian bases. Although the men who had been siphoned off to the naval infantry did not return, the detachment was reconstituted a second time, and readied for new missions. Golovko promised Vizgin a pair of dedicated patrol torpedo boats for insertions and extractions, and also ordered Vizgin to develop a relationship with air units, which would not only provide aircraft from which to jump, but also deliveries of food and ammunition. Vizgin requested and received permission to also plan for the use of submarines.<sup>19</sup>

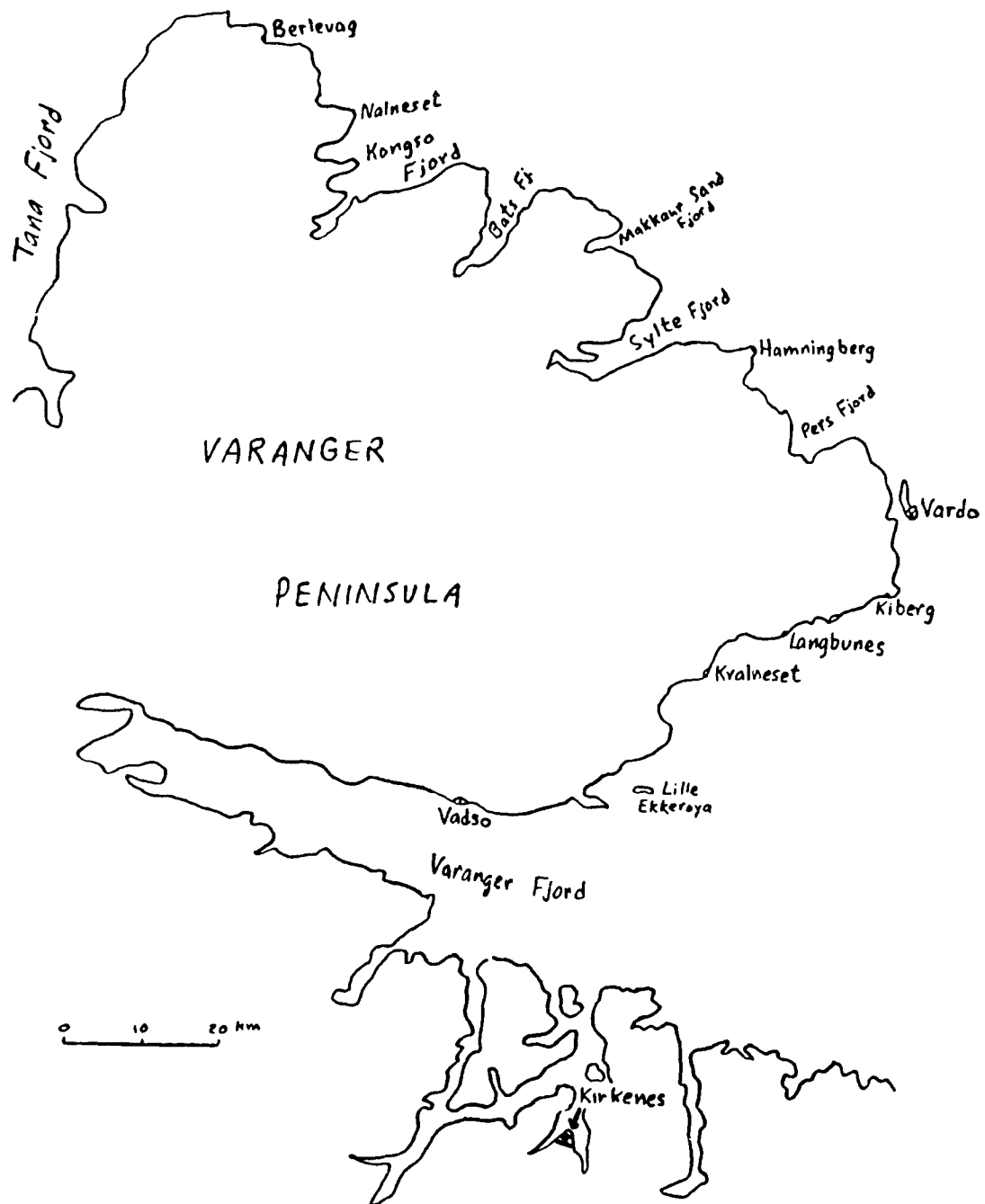
In September two small reconnaissance groups went out to determine the utility of land routes into and out of Norway, should bad weather prevent the use of sea routes. One group, which included three Norwegians, was inserted by an amphibious aircraft onto a lake, from which they walked into the area between Nikel and Luostari and back out again. Their journey lasted ten days and covered three hundred kilometers. The other group reconnoitered the zone closer to the sea coast, marching nearly two hundred kilometers in a week.

The first insertion of Soviet special operations forces into the Varanger Peninsula occurred in late September 1941.<sup>20</sup> (Map 2) This force had two missions: they were to determine the location, strength, and activities of German garrisons between Vardo and Vadso<sup>21</sup>, and establish contact with the Norwegian resistance, as part of a plan of regional intelligence activities.<sup>22</sup> Although led by a Soviet lieutenant, half of the eight-man group were Norwegians. They boarded a submarine in Polyarnyy and proceeded toward their landing site at Langbunes, twenty kilometers south of Vardo. On 26 September the group went ashore by rubber boat without incident, and remained in the German rear area until 15 November, continuously moving about the eastern portion of Varanger Peninsula to gain information and avoid capture. They reported their positions and activities by radio, made numerous contacts with Norwegian civilians, and on more than one occasion had to shoot their way clear of danger. Tight German population control measures prevented them from establishing contacts with the resistance, but they did learn much about the several small local German garrisons. Part of the group returned to Soviet control by fishing boat on 22 October, the remainder were picked up by a submarine on 15 November.

#### **LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS IN NORWAY (Maps 2,3)**

One of the conclusions drawn from the operation on Varanger Peninsula was that a protracted, Soviet-sponsored partisan struggle there was not feasible. There was little cover and concealment, all the populated areas were concentrated along the coastline, where the Germans could maintain tight observation and control, and the population base was too small to absorb strangers. The alternative to a Soviet-supported partisan effort was special operations, in the form of small groups of two—three men, inserted into the Varanger Peninsula to monitor and report on German naval traffic. Targeting data thus obtained would then be used to vector naval air and submarine forces.<sup>23</sup>

Late in 1941 Capt. 3d Rank Vizgin reported the preparation of five teams, each consisting of two Norwegians and one Soviet radio operator.<sup>24</sup> (Figure 1) The commander of this group was Sr. Lt. P. G. Sutyagin, and his political officer was a female, Krymova.<sup>25</sup> It was planned to deploy the first team in late December or early January, and the second team a few weeks later. Although the initial deployment areas were along the north coast of the Varanger Peninsula, in February Vizgin hoped to be placing teams near Nordkapp [North Cape] and Tromsø. In this manner the fleet intelligence staff could monitor German shipping along its entire route from the west coast of Norway into and out of Kirkenes, the main supply base for German ground forces in the Murmansk area. In order to assure reliable radio communications, Vizgin requested from the fleet chief of staff the establishment of a separate communications center, manned for around the clock monitoring of these groups' operations. The chief of staff also assured Vizgin of close air support, and the placing of reconnaissance specialists on ships.<sup>26</sup> The latter resulted in the inclusion in submarine crews of personnel specially trained for inserting and extracting reconnaissance teams by rubber boat, often accompanied by the platoon leader.



Map 2  
 Reconnaissance and Raid Objectives on the Varanger Peninsula



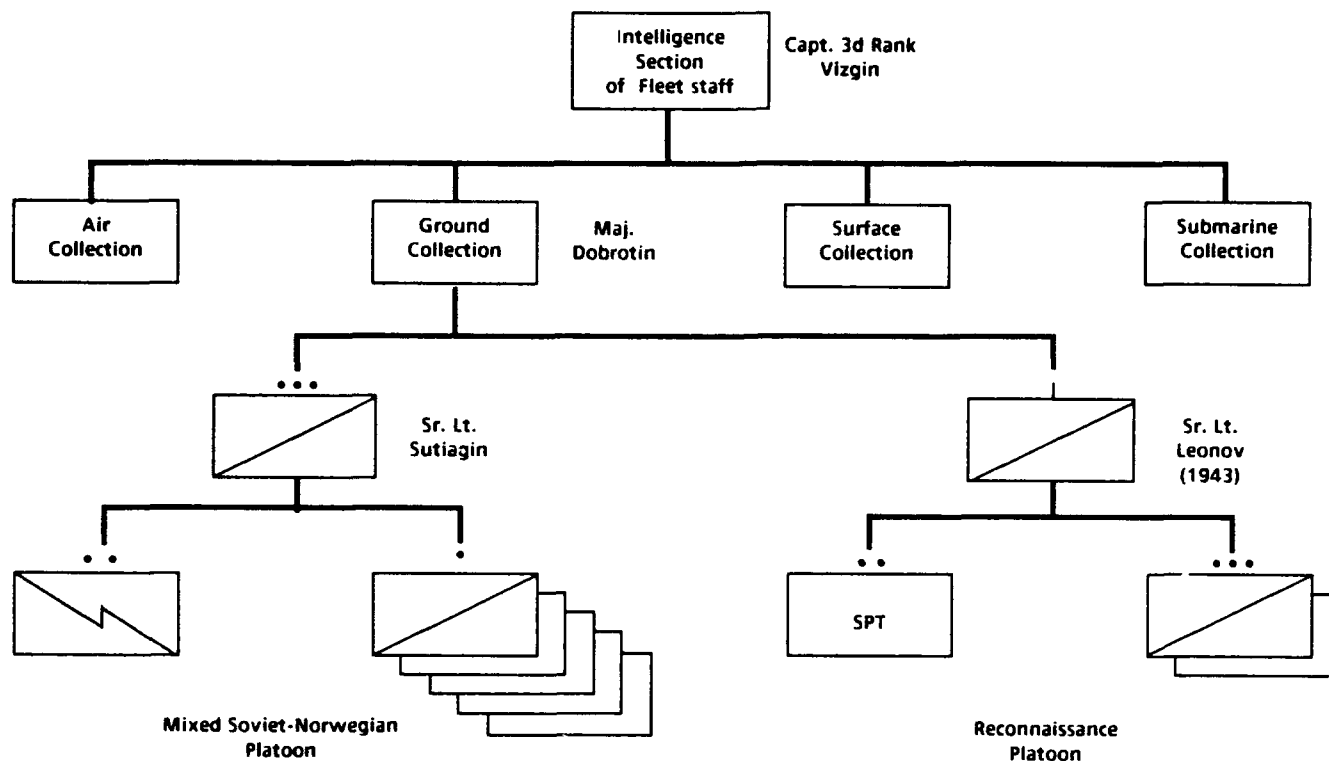
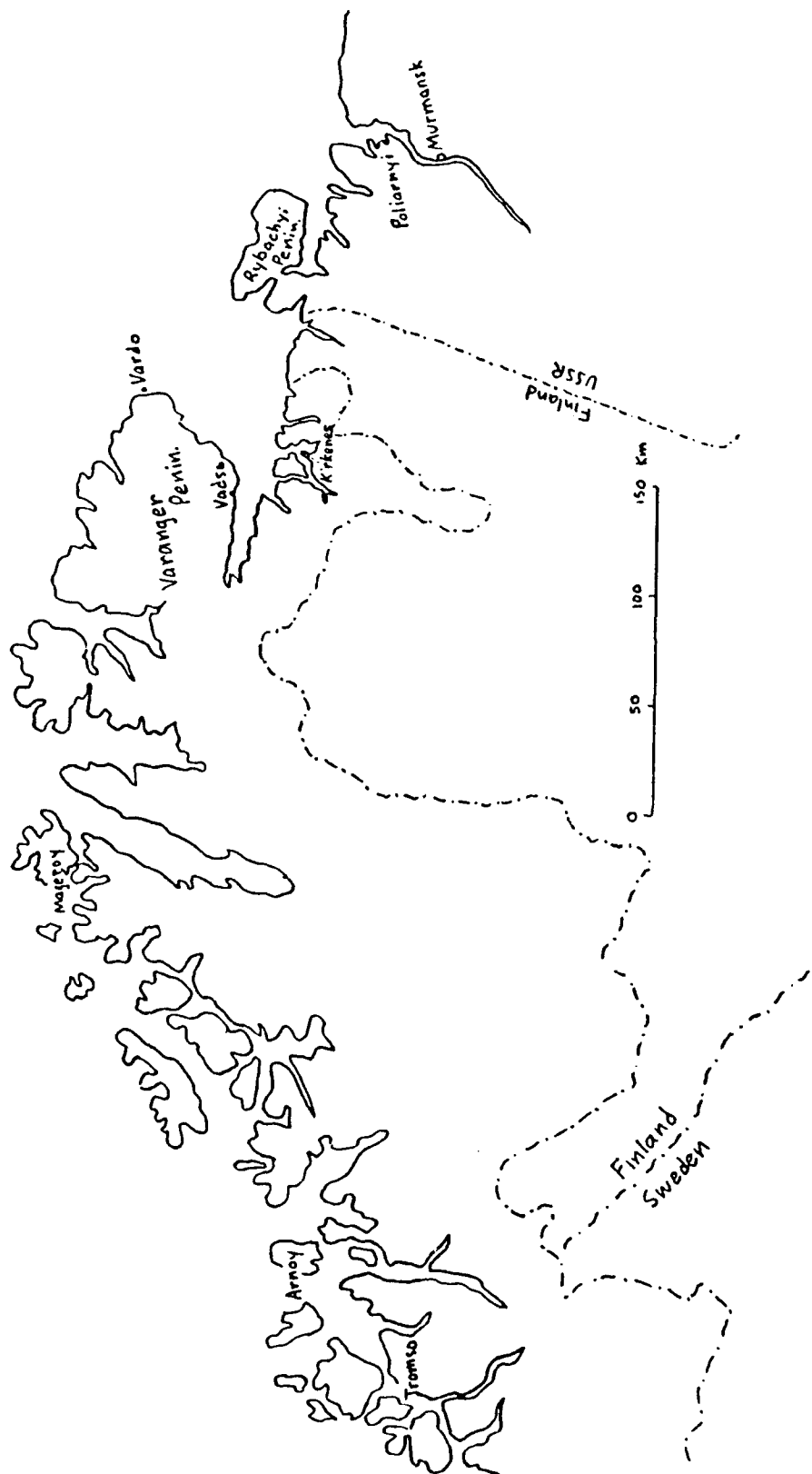


Figure 1  
Organization for Ground Reconnaissance, Headquarters Northern Fleet 1942—44

In early January 1942 the first team was inserted into the northern coast of Varanger Peninsula by submarine S-101, near Cape Nalneset [between Tana Fjord and Kongso Fjord].<sup>27</sup> This group operated in the area between Berlevag and Cape Nalneset for two and a half months, reporting not only on German naval traffic, but also the activities of the local garrison. They maintained limited contacts with sympathetic local Norwegians, from whom they obtained information about German population control measures, local military construction, and Soviet air operations against Kirkenes. They communicated regularly with their base, sometimes three times in a 24-hour period, and listened to reports given by other coast-watching teams. By the end of March, however, their provisions were exhausted, and they were in danger of exposure due to lengthening days. On 29 March they were alerted that a submarine was enroute to pick them up, and a few days later they were delivered to their base.

Not all attempts to land reconnaissance teams in Norway were successful. On 14 February a submarine approached the island Mageroy [ten kilometers southwest of Nordkapp], and after careful periscope reconnaissance of the landing area, surfaced to commence the landing operation.<sup>28</sup> While the small boats were taking the reconnaissance team to shore, strong winds and current pushed the submarine inshore, endangering it. The commander made another attempt to approach the shore, in order to put off the team's supplies, without success. For three nights the submarine remained in the area, while a storm raged. On the night of 18 February it returned to the landing area, on the surface, only to discover German patrol vessels. During the ensuing crash dive, the submarine commander was left mortally wounded on the conning tower, and was later captured alive by the Germans.<sup>29</sup> On shore, meanwhile, three men of the reconnaissance team and two sailors were left without food, special winter clothing, and other items of equipment necessary for their mission.<sup>30</sup>



Map 3  
Long Range Reconnaissance in Norway

Three days later, another team was lost in a similar incident.<sup>31</sup> A submarine was inserting them into Arnoy Island [northeast of Tromsø] on 21 February, 1942. Encountering problems with high seas and winds, it managed to land the two Norwegians, but not the Soviet radio operator. Although some weeks later these two Norwegians linked up with another team on the Varanger Peninsula, the two incidents together clearly indicated the need for better training of submarine crews and reconnaissance teams in small boat handling.

The next reported insertion of a team into Norway was on 4 April 1942, just a day after the extraction of the team from Nalneset. Submarine M-173 landed three men on the southeast shore of Sylte Fjord.<sup>32</sup> This team ranged east and west along the coast between Kiberg and Hamningberg, maintaining limited contacts with Norwegian sympathizers. In early May the two Norwegians who had been stranded on Arnoy in February joined them, and passed all the information they had gathered about German activities in the Tromsø area to their base by radio. The group remained in this area until sometime in the early autumn of 1942, resupplied periodically by air. Soviet sources credit them with providing information which led to the sinking of nine German transports.<sup>33</sup>

The insertions of these small reconnaissance teams continued through the remainder of 1942 and 1943.<sup>34</sup> It wasn't until September 1942 that German counter-intelligence was able to determine the existence of the group and how it operated, through a prisoner-of-war interrogation. Using this information, and reports from Norwegian collaborators, by the summer of 1943 the Germans were able to kill or capture several agents, and even had minor successes in turning agents, entering the radio net, and luring a Soviet submarine into ambush.<sup>35</sup> The only reference to another specific operation in Soviet sources is in the early spring of 1944.<sup>36</sup> A three-man team survived nine months on the run, enduring the elements, hunger, and German patrols vectored by radio direction finding teams. They were extracted by submarine from the Varanger Peninsula in the fall of 1944, with a German dog-equipped patrol in hot pursuit. By the Germans' own admissions, these teams were responsible for the sinking of many German ships.

#### RAIDS INTO ENEMY TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DEPTH (Map 1)

By late September 1941 the front had stabilized in the vicinity of the Litsa River, some 45—50 kilometers northwest of Murmansk. Vizgin used this time to build up the strength of his reconnaissance detachment and to train them. Intendant 3d Rank Inzartsev had been promoted to Captain and made commander of the detachment. Responding to requests for assistance from the 14th Army, Golovko authorized Vizgin to conduct a joint raid on German positions in the Titovka area.<sup>37</sup> On the night of 24 October a composite force of over 100 men landed from small subchasers along the south shore of Motovski Bay. They found a German garrison near the Titovka settlement, and attacked it, setting fire to a number of vehicles, a gasoline storage tank, and ammunition stocks.<sup>38</sup> They returned to the pickup point on the morning of 25 October, where four small boats extracted them.

During the winter of 1941—42, the detachment made several unsuccessful attempts to go ashore from submarines between Rybachiy Peninsula and Kirkenes.<sup>39</sup> The Germans had too many shore batteries, listening posts, and searchlight positions. Frequent winter storms and rough seas further complicated the efforts. Unable to approach German installations from seaward, the detachment went to ground.

In November 1941 another attempt was made to reconnoiter the Luostari airfield, this time by the detachment's ski teams.<sup>40</sup> They were to examine the approaches to the airfield, and discern the nature of its defensive system. If all went well, the ground force would initiate an attack, followed by air strikes by fleet aviation units.<sup>41</sup> The ski group was accompanied in the initial leg of its march by reindeer pulling sleds, on which were carried ammunition, heavy machineguns, and extra provisions. On 11 November they left Soviet lines, and crossed the Titovka River a few days later south of Lake Chapr. On 14 November they reached the target, and conducted detailed reconnaissance, including the drawing of sketches of airfield defenses and installations. On 15 November they began the seven-day trek back to friendly lines, carrying one of their men who had suffered an acute attack of appendicitis. It was probably this circumstance which caused the cancellation of the joint air and ground attack.

While the ski troops were reconnoitering the airfield, Capt. Inzartsev led a platoon-strength group on a mission to locate a German strongpoint overlooking the mouth of the Litsa River.<sup>42</sup> The group landed from two small subchasers, moved up into the snow-covered hills, and after some hours of movement, followed a telephone wire to a German guard post. Without carefully observing the surrounding landscape, they attacked the guard and an adjacent shelter. Several other Germans returned fire from nearby positions, forcing Inzartsev

and his men to make a hasty retreat to the shore. They had located the German position, but at the price of four dead.

Some time later, the army informed them of a captured Finnish lieutenant, who was willing to lead a patrol to an unoccupied "winterized" German strongpoint.<sup>43</sup> Vizgin sent seventy men on two boats from Polyarnyy to Cape Pikshuev, accompanied by an army detachment with the Finnish officer and an interpreter. Delayed by a winter storm, the composite detachment arrived at their target area on the second day, and moved directly from shore to the strongpoint. There, buried under the snow, they found two small antitank guns with over three hundred shells, other weapons and ammunition, and over seven kilometers of telephone wire in rolls. They moved all the captured materiel to shore, and then to their base. The detachment now had enemy guns and ammunition for use in operations behind German lines.<sup>44</sup>

In January 1942 a group of twenty-five men attempted to penetrate into the Nikel area, the site of an important mine and airfield, seventy kilometers behind the frontline and over fifty kilometers from the coast.<sup>45</sup> Golovko was not eager to permit an operation so far inland, but allowed it to go ahead, only because the army requested assistance. The mission was to determine how much ore was being extracted, and by what routes, means, and schedule it was being taken to Kirkenes for loading onto ships. The one-way distance to the objective area was over 150 kilometers, on extremely difficult terrain, in the coldest month of winter. Accompanied by reindeer pulling sleds, the group departed Soviet lines on 4 January, in temperatures below -30 degrees C. To avoid observation by German aircraft, they at first planned to move only at night. But the patrol leader soon discovered that the men could not lay still for long periods of time without suffering from frostbite, and so they had to move also during the day. It was during one of these daylight movements that a flight of German aircraft observed and strafed them, wounding ten men. The group was forced to return to base.

Also in January, another group from the detachment made an unobserved approach to a German position north of the Litsa River. Although the Soviets were numerically inferior to the German force, they had the element of surprise. Capt. Inzartsev was unable, however, to convince the senior officer, a member of Vizgin's staff, to permit an attack, or even an attempt to capture a prisoner. In the after-action review which followed, Admiral Golovko expressed strong displeasure with the planning and leadership of both. At his direction, younger and more experienced political officers were sought to accompany future patrols, and Vizgin's staff officer was reprimanded and prohibited from participation in subsequent missions.

In late January several unsuccessful attempts were made to insert two patrols along the coast between Petsamo Fjord and Kirkenes.<sup>46</sup> These groups contained both experienced and new personnel, some armed with German weapons. But they were unable to get ashore, either driven off by high seas or alert German shore battery crews.

At the end of February 1942, nearly three months had passed since the detachment had taken a detailed inventory of German activity on the south shore of Motovskiy Bay. On 3 March three small subchasers departed Polyarnyy, arriving in the landing area near Cape Pikshuev late that night.<sup>47</sup> One platoon went ashore to clear the immediate area, while the remainder of the force waited on the boats. When the lead platoon reached the rocky plateau above the landing site, it made contact with a German outpost of undetermined strength. The Soviet force quickly put the Germans to flight, while another platoon rushed from the boat to their aid. The Soviets quickly gathered up the documents from several German bodies, and took with them back to the boat a wounded German soldier, who soon died. Vizgin was himself present on one of the subchasers, and after consultation with the platoon leaders decided not to continue the operation. The element of surprise had been lost, and pursuit of the small German force could result in unnecessary casualties.

Another patrol of one—two platoons went to the same area on 13 March on two subchasers.<sup>48</sup> Sometime after midnight one group was put ashore south of Cape Pikshuev. Another dozen men were landed at Cape Mogilnyy, to the west. A storm quickly obscured the entire area, preventing any kind of signal communications between the forces ashore and the boats. The leader of the smaller of the two forces, moving by dead reckoning in a blinding snowstorm, halted his men in what he believed would be a safe shelter. At dawn, however, with the storm subsided, the group found themselves in the middle of a German position, which contained approximately ten shelters.

The Soviet scouts lay in the snow the entire day, observing the activities of this heretofore unknown German position. German aircraft enroute to bomb the Rybachiy Peninsula flew low overhead twice. German soldiers were constructing fortifications with rocks, apparently developing the position into a strongpoint.

After dark, the naval scouts quietly moved back toward their landing site, pulling behind them on a makeshift sled one of their men who had suffered frostbite. After waiting some three hours, they were picked up. Unable to find the other patrol, at dawn the boat commander returned to base.

Several unsuccessful attempts were made over the next five days to extract the remaining patrol, some being turned back by stormy seas, and another by German shelling and strafing. Golovko ordered Vizgin to personally lead the search. On the sixth recovery sortie, late on the evening of 19 March, Vizgin with two boats and naval air support extracted the patrol. Five of the men were taken straight from the dock to the hospital, with serious frostbite. The group had for six days contended with the weather, German ground troops, and periodic air searches. Their provisions ran out on 15 March, but they found a large codfish on the shore and ate it. Late on 18 March they observed a thirty-five man German search party, and the next morning German artillery began to fire methodically into the area. German ground forces, supported by aircraft, were closing in on them from two directions. As the patrol was about to be overrun, Soviet aircraft arrived on the scene and suppressed the German pursuers. The exhausted patrol was safely extracted.

The major combat activity of the detachment in early 1942 was a landing in support of the Soviet offensive, 28 April—13 May.<sup>49</sup> On 26 April, the reconnaissance detachment was subordinated to the commander, 12th Naval Infantry Brigade, to support his unit's landing on the German-held coast west of Cape Pikshuev. The mission of the detachment was to attack and seize a German outpost on Hill 415.3, and hold it until receipt of further orders.<sup>50</sup> Their landing was purposely timed to distract the attention of the German defenders from the main landing area of the larger brigade to the east. To Capt. 2d Rank Inzartsev's regret, all the planning for this operation had been done in the headquarters of the naval infantry brigade, without consultation with the reconnaissance detachment. The brigade communications officer gave Inzartsev an abbreviated list of codewords, to be used in communications with brigade headquarters.

Two platoons and a command group boarded small subchasers on the evening of 27 April, and landed at Cape Mogilnyy at midnight. German mortar fire greeted them at the shoreline, one round passing through one of the boats above the waterline. Soviet artillery from Rybachiy Peninsula conducted counterfires, enabling the detachment to get ashore. They made contact with German ground troops as soon as they moved into the rocky hills above the shore. Attacking from opposite flanks, the Soviet platoons drove the German company-size force back, and occupied the position. They had already suffered casualties, and were behind their time schedule. The Soviets continued to move southeastward, while the German infantry company followed them on a parallel course. Fourteen hours later, the naval scouts arrived at their objective, which was manned by just a few Germans with a machinegun. The Soviet unit quickly occupied the position, and awaited further orders.

The German company which had followed them invested the slopes of the hilltop, looking for some way to attack the Soviet position. The Germans set up three machineguns for support, and began to climb the hill. The scouts drove them back with their own rifle and machinegun fire. The remainder of the day and that night were quiet. But in the morning, the size of the German force on the slopes below them had doubled.

To the east of this action, the 12th Naval Infantry Brigade had come ashore unopposed, having found an undefended approach to the German defensive positions. By the morning of 29 April, a naval infantry battalion was in position 3—4 kilometers southwest of the reconnaissance detachment, on a lower hill. Inzartsev could observe a German force encircling the naval infantry, but he was unable to contact either them or brigade headquarters. The German force around his own position continued to grow, now reaching battalion strength. If they were going to help the naval infantry battalion break encirclement, Inzartsev and his men would first have to break out themselves.

The men, meanwhile, began to suffer from the cold. Their boots and clothing were still wet from the landing, and the temperature hovered around freezing. There was no cover on the hilltop from the cold wind. The German troops continued to probe the Soviet defenses from all sides, seeking a way to the top. Twelve separate attacks were beaten back. For another night Inzartsev and his men sat on the hilltop, still without communication with brigade headquarters. On April 30 he ordered his men to conserve ammunition. A third night passed. Their water consumed, the men began to eat snow, which fell intermittently. Between snow squalls, the sun shone brightly, causing snow blindness.

On the fifth day, Inzartsev sent Viktor Leonov with two men to establish contact with the naval infantry battalion, to seek their fire support for an attempt to break through the German encirclement. The battalion

commander received permission from brigade to send a rifle and a mortar platoon over to Hill 415.3 to reinforce the scouts, but a breakout maneuver was forbidden. With the help of these reinforcements, the reconnaissance detachment held Hill 415.3 until 4 May, when they finally were ordered to withdraw. Of the seventy men who landed ashore on 27 April, ten were healthy, two were dead, two were wounded, and the remainder were suffering from frostbite or snow blindness.

In early summer 1942, the detachment conducted another patrol to the Luostari airfield.<sup>51</sup> The mission was the same as before—observe German activity there and determine the nature of the defensive system. The 400-kilometer round trip was figured to take three weeks. Each of the fifty men carried not only his own supplies, but also common items, such as extra ammunition discs, radios, and batteries. Five radio operators accompanied this patrol, far more than normal.

The detachment walked for several days, crossed the Titovka and Petsamo rivers, photographing and noting locations of suitable fording sites. When they finally arrived at an observation position near the airfield, they drew sketches of it and took more photographs. Six days later the scouts crossed back into Soviet positions, where they reorganized for a brief excursion to Lake Chapr. Part of the detachment took all the remaining supplies for the new mission, the remainder returned to base. The patrol to Lake Chapr was brief, lasting 3—4 days. The group found evidence of German patrolling activity, but no positions or forces until they reached Hill 374 [Bolshoy Karikvayvash]. There they noted a German observation position of at least half a dozen men. This patrol also returned safely.

Several changes greeted the scouts on their return to Polyarnyy. Their barracks had been bombed, and several men killed and wounded. Lt. Col. Dobrotin and Capt. Inzartsev were leaving for new assignments. Their new commander was immediately unpopular with the men. A few scouts were taken to the naval infantry, several men were transferred out due to their injuries or wounds, and three others went away to attend short courses. Another wave of new volunteers arrived.

In September 1942 the detachment was once again subordinated to a naval infantry force for an operation.<sup>52</sup> Two platoons, fifty men, were to accompany two companies of naval infantry and a platoon of sappers from the Rybachiy Peninsula to the south shore of Motovskiy Bay, lead them to the German strongpoint at Cape Mogilnyy, then return to shore. It did not sound too difficult, many of the scouts knew the terrain in that area well, having landed there themselves in earlier operations. At dawn the composite force was to return to Rybachiy.

At midnight, as the boats carrying the reconnaissance detachment approached the shore west of Cape Pikshuev, machinegun and mortar fire fell around them. The boat commanders returned fire and put the force ashore. A short distance away the naval infantry also disembarked. But coordination between the two forces was poor. Two hours after coming ashore, with no orders from the naval infantry company commander, the reconnaissance detachment commander decided to press on to the objective. After an hour of marching, they made contact with the naval infantry captain and one company, the other company having become lost.

Already behind schedule, the naval infantry captain ordered the composite detachment to move forward, scouts leading, without an advance guard. At sunrise, they were still moving. The scouts separated from the main body again, to attack the objective from another flank. As they approached the German strongpoint through a defile, the reconnaissance detachment fell under heavy machinegun and mortar fire. Several men were wounded or pinned down in the first volleys, and the detachment was split into small groups. Part of the detachment moved back to shore, carrying their wounded commander, other men reached the shore singly or in small groups. Led by Viktor Leonov, by skillful maneuver the remaining fifteen scouts consolidated and organized a defense, waiting for help from the naval infantry, which never came. Soviet artillery from Rybachiy Peninsula fired over four hundred shells, but none of them landed on the Germans. One of the scouts lost his nerve, and blew himself up with a grenade. A German aircraft flew overhead, but the scouts did not fire at it.

At nightfall, Leonov prepared his group to breakout. Leaving seven dead and carrying their wounded, they moved by rushes toward the shore, covering themselves with small arms fire and grenades. By dawn they reached the point where they had landed, but found no boats. Falling snow obscured their view of the sea. Two times boats approached their position and then turned away. Finally two boats approached, one laid a smoke screen and the other rushed in to extract the scouts. Other members of the detachment, pulled off the shore at other points, were already on board. The boats returned them to Polyarnyy.

At the ensuing after action review by the Fleet military council, it was revealed that the naval infantry captain had led his unit in headlong flight to the shore as soon as the first shot was fired by the Germans. The military council delivered him over to a tribunal. A few days later, Vice Admiral Nikolaev decorated several men of the reconnaissance detachment, and at the same ceremony appointed Viktor Leonov a junior lieutenant.<sup>53</sup>

## THE RECONNAISSANCE DETACHMENT IN RAIDS ON THE VARANGER PENINSULA

In the spring of 1943, the reconnaissance detachment moved to the Solovetskiy islands, in the White Sea, to train for combat actions on the Varanger Peninsula.<sup>54</sup> The organizer and supervisor of this training was Lt. Sutyagin, the platoon leader of the mixed Norwegian-Soviet platoon. The recent infusion of many new personnel into the detachment necessitated training in landing operations, in addition to instruction on the language, customs, and terrain of the new area of operations.

The first operation into the Varanger Peninsula was a futile effort to execute a night ambush on the coast road between Vardo and Vadso.<sup>55</sup> (Map 2) There was no vehicular or foot traffic, and the detachment returned to base empty handed. Vizgin relieved the detachment commander, and appointed Viktor Leonov, by this time the political officer, as the new commander. He gave Leonov and Sutyagin three days to prepare for another landing. Together the two leaders planned a different approach to the task.

In a preliminary raid, Leonov and six men went ashore on the small island Lille Ekkeroya [twenty kilometers east of Vadso], and captured the lighthouse operator.<sup>56</sup> Enroute back to base, Sutyagin interrogated him, and learned the pattern of German traffic along the road. Several days later, about half the detachment returned to the peninsula and landed just after nightfall. Deployed along the road in three groups, they ambushed a column of German vehicles, destroying many by small arms fire and grenades. Three prisoners were captured and taken back to base.

Other successful raids into Varanger Peninsula followed. In December 1943, the detachment landed near Cape Kvalneset [thirty kilometers southwest of Vardo].<sup>57</sup> They climbed up the steep coastal escarpment to the road above, and came out near a small cottage. Here they killed two German guards, and captured six others who were inside, drinking. Later interrogation of these Germans revealed information concerning an incident involving a Soviet submarine which had entered Bats Fjord.

In February 1944 the detachment conducted a raid on a German shore battery guarding Bats Fjord, located midway along the northern shore of Varanger Peninsula.<sup>58</sup> Although the plan was to land in Makkaur Sand Fjord to the southeast and attack the German position from the rear, the patrol torpedo boat was turned back by the fire and then signal-light interrogation of a German shore observation post. Leonov and Shabalin, the boat commander, agreed upon another approach, and turned the vessel to the west, toward Bats Fjord. Ignoring the signals of the German observation post, the torpedo boat slipped quietly into the fjord and landed the detachment on a deserted shore, less than two kilometers from the small Norwegian settlement Batsfjord. Leonov divided his detachment into an assault group and a support group, and moved to the village to capture prisoners. Shabalin followed them with his boat, hugging the shoreline. The scouts returned to the waiting boat with two German sailors, bound and gagged. Shabalin guided his torpedo boat out into the open sea, and by dawn returned the detachment with its prisoners to base.

Another similar raid was less successful. A group on two patrol torpedo boats approached a Norwegian fjord entrance during a storm, and made its way past the German light post by imitative deception.<sup>59</sup> When the two boats reached the landing site, Leonov and his main force moved to the shore in small boats without difficulty. The support group and communications cell on the other torpedo boat, however, did not organize themselves properly for a rapid landing. As a result, one of the assault team leaders was left on the shoreline with the radio operators, while the main force was executing the raid on the nearby small German garrison. The stranded team leader moved forward alone, seeking to rejoin his unit. The main force completed its mission, called the boats forward to pick them up, and the entire force departed the area. The team leader was lost, not only because he had sought to catch up to his men, but also because his absence was not reported prior to departure from the area.

Occasionally a raiding force was not able to reach the objective area, because of action at sea enroute. In one such occurrence, Shabalin with two patrol torpedo boats was delivering Leonov to the Varanger Peninsula.<sup>60</sup> They came upon a well escorted German convoy, and in the ensuing sea battle one of Leonov's men was

killed. Although the Germans lost two ships to Soviet torpedoes, the reconnaissance mission was scrubbed and Shabalin returned to the forward base at Pummanki.

In another similar incident, the detachment was returning from a successful raid on the Varanger Peninsula, when it encountered a German convoy.<sup>61</sup> The smoke discharging apparatus on the deck of one of the patrol torpedo boats was struck by a shell, igniting the device and threatening the safety of the boat. Two nearby scouts, risking their own lives, were able to tear the apparatus away from its mountings and push it overboard. One of the men later died as a result of the burns he received, and the other had to be transferred to the Black Sea Fleet, away from the cold northern climate. Despite these occasional setbacks, according to Leonov the detachment conducted several more raids along the Varanger coastline through the spring of 1944, each time returning with extra "passengers".<sup>62</sup>

## THE PETSAMO-KIRKENES OPERATION

The concluding combat actions of Leonov's detachment in the European theater were two landings in support of the Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation, in October 1944.<sup>63</sup> In late September, Admiral Golovko's staff began to plan an amphibious landing at Liinakhamari, the small harbor north of Petsamo in Petsamo Bay. Entrance to Petsamo Bay was controlled by a German shore battery position on Cape Krestovyy (Ristaniemi). To neutralize these guns, Golovko ordered the use of a composite raiding force, made up of the reconnaissance detachments of the Northern Defensive Region (100 men) and of the Northern Fleet (80 men). Attachments included a team of artillerymen, and a group of combat engineers, totaling fifteen men. The overall commander of the composite force was Capt. Barchenko-Emel'ianov, commander of the naval infantry reconnaissance detachment.<sup>64</sup>

The composite detachment came ashore at 0100 hours on 10 October, west of the main landing site of the entire 63d Naval Infantry Brigade. The detachment moved off to the southwest, while the larger brigade attacked German positions to the southeast. For forty-eight hours the men walked across extremely difficult terrain, in weather characterized by freezing temperatures and intermittent rain and snow showers. They reached the objective early on the morning of 12 October. Here they split into three groups, Leonov's to attack the anti-aircraft battery on the cape's south slope, and two from Barchenko-Emel'ianov's force to invest the strongpoint in the center and the artillery battery on the cape's north shore.

In the early morning darkness the sailors attacked and quickly overwhelmed the anti-aircraft battery, and the naval infantrymen captured the strongpoint. But they could not penetrate the defenses of the shore battery. At dawn on 12 October, the Germans remaining on the cape launched a counterattack, supported by additional forces landed on the cape from Liinakhamari.<sup>65</sup> German indirect fire support assets from the surrounding area fired in support of the counterattack, causing serious casualties in the Soviet force. Leonov's men removed the breechblocks of the anti-aircraft guns and withdrew toward the strongpoint, while Soviet naval close air support pounded the German positions. Soviet artillery from Sredniy Peninsula conducted counterbattery fire throughout the day.

By dusk Leonov's men had recaptured the anti-aircraft battery position and adjacent shoreline. Germans remaining on the cape were pinned down with the crews of the shore battery in their bunkers, unable to employ the guns. At approximately 2230 hours a Soviet amphibious force of over a dozen vessels entered Petsamo Bay and landed over six hundred men in the Liinakhamari harbor, without interference from the shore battery on Cape Krestovyy. Before dawn on 13 October, Capt. Barchenko-Emel'ianov obtained the surrender of 80—110 German soldiers. The composite detachment lost ten killed, eight of those from Leonov's group, and forty-three wounded. Barchenko-Emel'ianov, Leonov, and two of Leonov's men were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union in recognition of their actions in this raid.

On 27 October, just two days after the capture of Kirkenes, Leonov's detachment conducted its final operation in Norway.<sup>66</sup> A reconnaissance party of ten men parachuted into the hills southwest of Vardo on the night of 27 October, but was scattered by strong winds. Radio contact with that group was immediately lost. On 29 October three survivors of the ill-fated jump reached Soviet-controlled ports by motorboat. On the night of 30 October, the remainder of Leonov's detachment went ashore at Cape Langbunes, twenty kilometers southwest of Vardo. They quickly established contact with the survivors of the parachute jump, and through conversations with civilians determined that the Germans had already fled the area. On the basis of this information, plans for a full-scale landing were cancelled. Leonov moved his group to Vardo by boat. Although the Germans had destroyed much of the port and its facilities, they also had abandoned large stocks of food and



other materiel, including small arms. The detachment turned these supplies over to the Norwegians, and returned to their base at Polyarnyy on 2 November.

## APPLICATION OF NORTHERN FLEET EXPERIENCE TO PACIFIC THEATER

With the war against the Germans in the Far North now over, the detachment stood down. But even while German forces were defending their homeland, the Soviet Union was planning its entry into the war with Japan. The first transfer of naval special operations forces to the new theater occurred in March of 1945, when three squad leaders were sent to the Amur River flotilla.<sup>67</sup> A week after the German defeat in May, Leonov's detachment was alerted for restationing to the Pacific Fleet.<sup>68</sup> A selection was made of the young and healthy men, leaving behind those whose wounds were disabling, and others who were reservists or nearing the end of their term of service. The remaining group of approximately forty-four men left Polyarnyy in the last week of May, and arrived in Vladivostok on 12 June, having ridden the entire distance by railroad.

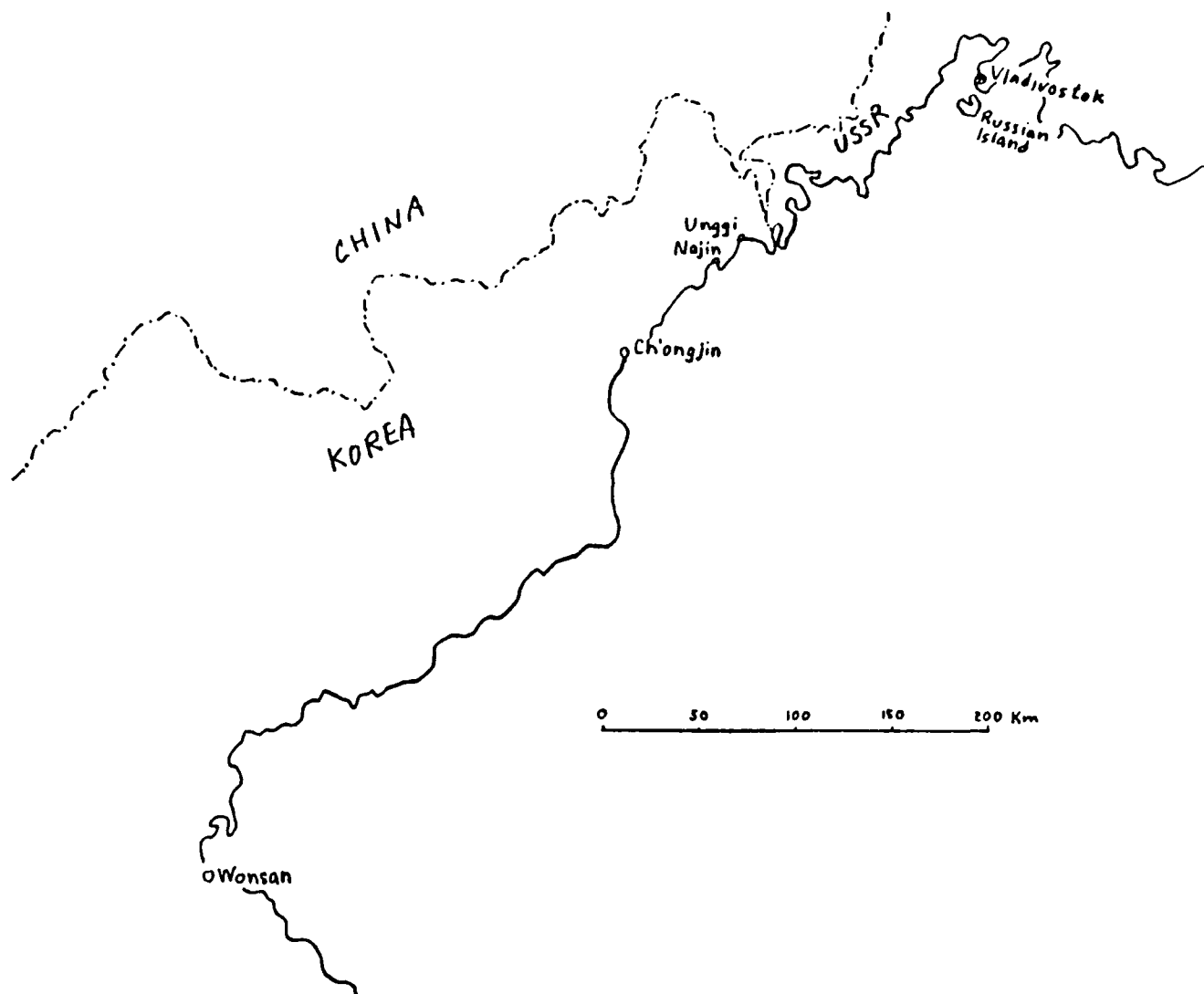
The Pacific Fleet already had a reconnaissance force established by Lt. Col. N. A. Inzartsev, who as discussed above had earlier commanded the detachment in the Northern Fleet. The "Northerners" made up one-third of the combined detachment, giving it a total strength of approximately 130 men. Leonov became the new commander, and quickly organized the detachment into two platoons and a support section. He placed "Northerners" in all leadership positions down to squad level, and distributed the remainder of his veterans evenly throughout the unit. On 19 June the detachment moved to a barracks on Russian Island, in the entrance to the bay at Vladivostok. Here they could live and train in relative isolation.

In the six-week period between reorganization and combat employment, the 140th Reconnaissance Detachment of Headquarters, Pacific Fleet trained in a variety of individual and collective tasks.<sup>69</sup> The "East-erners" had served generally from twelve to eighteen months, but had not experienced any combat. Leonov built his training program around physical conditioning, movement techniques, the use of various types of vessels for amphibious landings, map reading, urban combat skills, and recognition of enemy weapons signatures and uniforms.

The detachment's first mission was to land in the Korean port Unggi, to seize and hold a beachhead until reinforcements arrived.<sup>70</sup> (Map 4) The 25th Army of Marshal K. A. Meretskov's 1st Far Eastern Front was attacking southward along the coast, though there is no evidence that Leonov coordinated his plans with any ground force units. Coming behind Leonov would be a battalion of naval infantry, with several additional battalions available if needed. On 9—10 August Soviet naval air and surface units attacked Japanese installations in the port.<sup>71</sup> Leonov's detachment landed at the docks in the afternoon of 11 August, unopposed. They quickly moved into the city on preassigned axes, through the commercial district into the residential areas.

Without firing a shot, Leonov's men occupied defensive positions near the railroad station, and using Korean interpreters who had accompanied the landing force<sup>72</sup>, made contact with the local civilians. From them it was learned that the Japanese garrison of approximately 2,000 men had abandoned the city early that morning. While the detachment consolidated their defensive positions, Leonov, his political officer, and one of the Korean interpreters conducted a clandestine meeting with a Soviet agent, who had been inserted into Unggi prior to the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>73</sup> This agent gave Leonov valuable information on the Japanese forces still in the area.

Leonov's men remained in their positions through the night, disturbed only once by a small group of Japanese troops probing their perimeter. Early in the morning a forward detachment of the 393d Rifle Division, 25th Army, approached the city along the main road from the north. Leonov went out to meet this column, and in the early morning darkness coordinated with its commander on the capture of the detachment's subsequent objective, the port of Najin, several kilometers farther down the coast.<sup>74</sup> At this same time a company of naval infantrymen landed in two patrol torpedo boats, and relieved the reconnaissance detachment in place. Leonov and his men boarded their own boats at midday on 12 August and proceeded to their next objective.



**Map 4**  
*Landing Operations in Korea*

The detachment's mission in Najin was the same: reconnoiter the port, determine the enemy strength and intentions, and capture a beachhead for the follow-on force.<sup>75</sup> Once again their landing was preceded by naval air and surface bombardment. On the way into the harbor, the detachment received small arms fire from two small islands, but without effect. The men went ashore at the docks, and quickly moved into the city. One platoon secured the railroad station, military barracks, and industrial area of the port, while the other moved along the shore. The detachment met light resistance from Japanese infantry rearguards. The interrogation of Korean civilians revealed the recent retreat of the Japanese garrison, which Leonov reported to fleet headquarters by radio. In reply, fleet ordered him to make contact with a company of naval infantry landed nearby, turn control of the port over to them, and return to base. The detachment arrived back at its base on the evening of 12 August.

After just several hours of rest, at 0500 hours on 13 August the detachment was alerted to its next mission, a landing in the Korean port Ch'ongjin. Along with a company of naval infantry, the detachment was to land in the port, occupy a beachhead, and hold it until the arrival of the main force, a brigade of naval infantry.<sup>76</sup> The composite detachment was commanded by Col. A. Z. Denisin, chief of the intelligence section of the fleet. After some four hours at sea, the combined force entered Ch'ongjin harbor, still smoking from Soviet naval air and torpedo boat attacks. At around noon Leonov's men landed at the commercial docks, and the naval infantrymen at the naval piers.<sup>77</sup>

Although not opposed at the water's edge, Leonov's men soon encountered fierce resistance, and began a running battle which lasted until the morning of 15 August. Leonov's force initially fought alone, isolated from the naval infantry company. The two forces finally joined together about twelve hours after landing. During this first night of combat, Col. Denisin and a three-man security team slipped away from the detachment and clandestinely met with one or more of his agents.<sup>78</sup>

The first reinforcements, the 355th Naval Infantry Battalion, landed early on the morning of 14 August in the eastern side of the harbor, and engaged large numbers of Japanese troops, who otherwise would have pressed in on Leonov and his men. On 14 August the reconnaissance detachment and the naval infantry company continued to hold on, though forced to retreat back toward the docks. During the night of 14—15 August, their ammunition nearly exhausted, they were literally defending the docks, with Japanese infantry only 80—100 yards away. At around 0100 hours, two Soviet naval vessels appeared in the harbor, and reinforced the beleaguered force with naval gunfire.<sup>79</sup>

The captain of the frigate, an acquaintance of Leonov from the Northern Fleet, took Leonov and two men aboard ship to help his gunners adjust fire into the Japanese positions. After the initial volleys drove the Japanese away from the dock area, fire adjustment parties from the two vessels came ashore and were escorted inland by Leonov's men. The reconnaissance detachment thus was able to expand the beachhead before dawn, when the 13th Naval Infantry Brigade arrived. As this brigade disembarked in the harbor, Leonov provided scouts to guide them into the city. Army ground forces arrived from the north on 16 August.

In just over forty-eight hours of intense combat, Leonov had lost three killed and seven wounded in his detachment.<sup>80</sup> Leonov received his second, and one of his platoon leaders, Makar Babikov, his first award of Hero of the Soviet Union for their actions in Ch'ongjin. The detachment returned to their base at Vladivostok for rest and preparation for their final operation.

On 19 August the reconnaissance detachment departed for Ch'ongjin, the staging area for a large amphibious assault on the Korean port Wonsan. Leonov's men left Ch'ongjin on the evening of 20 August, accompanied by a representative of the intelligence section of the fleet, Lt. Col. Inzartsev, and a small group of engineer troops with mine detectors. For this mission Leonov's detachment was subordinated to the chief of staff of the 13th Naval Infantry Brigade, which comprised the bulk of the main follow-on force. The mission of the total assault force was to move quickly and secretly to the port, capture it along with its nearby airfield, force the Japanese garrison to capitulate, and then disarm and intern it. Enemy ships were not to be permitted to leave the harbor.<sup>81</sup> The reconnaissance detachment was, as before, the forward detachment for the main body.

Leonov's detachment entered the harbor at Wonsan and landed at its west end at 0900 hours on 21 August, unopposed.<sup>82</sup> Leonov took the support platoon and one squad from each line platoon and moved off into the center of the city. Arriving at the Japanese military headquarters, he and his political officer sat down at a table with a group of Japanese officers, and demanded a signed act of capitulation be published to the entire

Japanese garrison. The discussion ended with the Japanese officers deferring to their senior commanders, an admiral and an army colonel. Knowing that Inzartsev with another platoon was moving toward the garrison, Leonov took his men off to secure the bank, the post office, and the telegraph office.

The platoon accompanied by Lt. Col. Inzartsev moved directly to the Japanese garrison headquarters, where they encountered a Japanese colonel. Surrounded by armed Japanese soldiers, the Soviet officers delivered an oral surrender ultimatum to the Japanese officer, who politely accepted it and agreed to relay it to his superior officer. Inzartsev invited the Japanese side to send representatives to the harbor to discuss the capitulation with the assault force commander at an agreed upon time four hours hence. The scouts withdrew with their small force to the docks.

At approximately 1500 hours, the Soviet main assault force commander, Capt. 1st Rank Studenichnikov [O-6 equivalent], and the naval infantry brigade commander came into port. After Inzartsev reported the course of the negotiations, Studenichnikov ordered the entire assault force to enter the harbor, but remain aboard ship. The deadline for the Japanese delegation to arrive in the harbor passed. Studenichnikov ordered Leonov to go with a small force to the Japanese garrison headquarters and bring the senior officers back to the ship.

Leonov took two squads from each platoon and returned to the garrison headquarters. After some discussion, during which Leonov reiterated the Soviet demand for unconditional capitulation, he escorted a Japanese admiral, a colonel, and several staff officers back to Studenichnikov's flagship in the harbor. While the Japanese command group was detained in this manner, Japanese military units in the city began to move toward the harbor. With a naval infantry company which had just landed in another part of the harbor, Leonov's detachment made a show of force in the waterfront area, enough to cause the Japanese units to withdraw back into the city. Aboard ship, Studenichnikov finally convinced the Japanese commanders of the need to capitulate, in order to avoid further bloodshed.

Concerned lest the Japanese garrison attempt during the night to withdraw units and equipment away from the city toward the south, Leonov sent a demolitions group with a squad from his detachment by patrol torpedo boat to a point south of the harbor, where the railroad line passed along the coast. There his men blew up a bridge, cutting the line and thus preventing its use.<sup>83</sup>

There still remained the matter of the nearby Japanese airfield. One attempt to occupy it with a company of naval infantry had already failed. On 22 August Leonov moved his full detachment to the shore adjoining the airfield on eight torpedo boats.<sup>84</sup> The men jumped off into shallow water, walked up onto the shore adjacent to all the airfield fuel and ammunition storage facilities, and quickly secured them. From this position his men could also control the landing field with their fires. Armed with automatic weapons, and supported by the thirty-two heavy machineguns of the torpedo boats, Leonov's 140-man detachment was a formidable force.

The Japanese sent officer parliamentaries out to meet the force, and Leonov with ten men returned with them to the airfield headquarters. Accompanying Leonov in this group was Capt. 3d Rank Kulebyakin, a representative of the fleet staff. The Japanese airfield commander, a colonel, and the two Soviet officers engaged in a forty-minute exchange, which can aptly be characterized as a psychological stand-off.<sup>85</sup> The Soviets finally convinced the Japanese officer to surrender his forces, which totalled nearly five thousand men.

Leonov and his men returned to the harbor in Wonsan. On 23 August the detachment and a small naval infantry force landed on one of the islands in the harbor to disarm the garrison there.<sup>86</sup> Three days later, the detachment was ordered to return to its base at Vladivostok. In a manner appropriate to such a unique assemblage of sailors, Leonov's detachment crewed and sailed a trophy Japanese vessel back to their base. While they were crossing the Sea of Japan, fleet headquarters radioed them the news that the 140th Reconnaissance Detachment of Headquarters, Pacific Fleet, had been designated "guards" status.<sup>87</sup>

## **WARTIME EXPERIENCE AS AN INDICATOR OF CURRENT CAPABILITIES**

From this detailed and somewhat lengthy description of the combat employment of the reconnaissance detachments of Northern and Pacific fleets, one can reasonably conclude that they were indeed special operations forces. Analysis of several aspects of their organization, personnel, and combat operations further establishes these forces as historical precursors for what is now called Soviet naval *spetsnaz*.

A good start point is the name of the organization. According to Babikov, the Northern Fleet detachment's first official unit designation was "4th Special Volunteer Detachment of Sailors,"<sup>88</sup> which in August 1941

changed to "4th Reconnaissance Detachment of Headquarters, Fleet<sup>89</sup>, and ultimately became the 181st Special Reconnaissance Detachment [*osobogo razvedyvatel'nogo otryada*].<sup>90</sup> In current Soviet sources, the organization is referred to by a number of descriptive titles: "Reconnaissance detachment (Northern Fleet),"<sup>91</sup> "Reconnaissance detachment of naval scouts,"<sup>92</sup> and "Special purpose reconnaissance detachment of the Northern Fleet."<sup>93</sup> The Pacific Fleet's detachment is referred to in similar terms. The most common elements in all these titles are "reconnaissance", and "special purpose" [*osobogo naznacheniya*].

A second hallmark of these detachments was their subordination to the highest level of operational command in the Soviet navy—the fleet headquarters. The clearest evidence of this is in the Northern Fleet, where Admiral Golovko was frequently personally involved in the day-to-day activities of the detachment. Leonov makes several references to personal meetings with Golovko to discuss operational issues. Golovko specified missions and received reports, both from the field and after the fact. Occasionally the detachments were subordinated to a naval infantry command for a specific mission, but they always returned to control of the fleet headquarters. Even their barracks was at the fleet main base in Polyarnyy, not the forward base at Pummanki, which was much closer to their area of operations. The Pacific Fleet detachment, which was stationed at fleet main base in Vladivostok, during all four of its landings continued to send reports by radio to fleet headquarters, despite its operational subordination to naval infantry headquarters.

The spectrum of missions conducted by these reconnaissance detachments ranged from conventional to unconventional, with an admixture of military, economic, and political objectives. On the conventional side were many of the small-scale reconnaissance and raid operations against German small unit positions and strongpoints along the left (coastal) flank of the German corps facing Murmansk and Polyarnyy. Some of these raids the detachment conducted alone, and others in conjunction with naval infantry forces. All were directed toward the detection, disruption, or destruction of German tactical units. The first three landings in northern Korean ports also were conventional operations, wherein the detachment acted as a forward detachment for a larger follow-on amphibious force.

The several attempts, some successful, to reconnoiter the German airfield at Luostari, the unsuccessful effort to reach the mines at Nikel, and all the raids by the larger detachment along the Varanger Peninsula were unconventional operations. These penetrations went deep into the German corps rear area, where their combat support and logistic infrastructure lay. Luostari airfield was fifty-kilometers from the coastline, but since its aircraft were used to bomb Northern Fleet bases, Admiral Golovko authorized its reconnaissance. The mines at Nikel were producing strategic ores for the German munitions factories. Though the attempt to reach this area with a ground reconnaissance element failed, the fact that it was considered a proper target is in itself significant. In their raids on the Varanger Peninsula, Leonov's men were attacking vehicular convoys and isolated shore installations, capturing prisoners and destroying war materiel. Information gained by these frequent penetrations into Norwegian bases kept Golovko apprised of German capabilities for near-term major land or naval operations.

The mixed Soviet-Norwegian coast-watching platoon was used to conduct operational and strategic-depth reconnaissance. The island Arnoy, north of Tromsø, where two Norwegians were put ashore in February 1942 without a radio operator, is 450 kilometers straight line distance from Polyarnyy, and twice as far by sea. The information to be gained by observing German naval traffic along Norway's west coast was useful to Golovko for his own fleet's missions, but it was also important to the Royal Navy, which was escorting British and American convoys to Soviet northern ports. German surface and submarine forces staged in the fjords along the west coast of Norway for their frequent attacks on the convoys. It is likely, therefore, that the activities of the mixed Soviet-Norwegian platoon were closely monitored by Soviet intelligence organs in Moscow.<sup>94</sup>

It is important to recognize that although both the Northern and Pacific fleet detachments came out of the same personnel base, beginning with Lt. Col. Inzartsev and extending to the core of combat experienced personnel, they were employed in a somewhat different manner. The presence of covert Soviet agents in two Korean ports suggests the existence of an element in the Pacific Fleet analogous to Sutyagin's mixed Soviet-Norwegian platoon. But there is no trace of such a structure in Soviet sources. The Pacific Fleet reconnaissance detachment never went deep inland, and did not conduct operations into Japanese rear areas. These differences in organization and mission reflect a Soviet penchant for tailoring forces to a specific theater of military operations. The detachment in the Northern Fleet was born out of a specific need, and was developed and modified to respond to particular requirements of the mission, the enemy, and the terrain. When the detachment moved to the Pacific theater, it quickly adapted to the changed conditions.

The use of the reconnaissance detachment as a means to contact covert intelligence agents in northern Korea is instructive. It goes beyond the exploitation of a sympathetic local population for information on the enemy, and reflects a high degree of confidence in the political reliability of Leonov and his men. Leonov's role in negotiating the capitulation of Japanese forces in Wonsan is also significant. Although he was not designated as a plenipotentiary of the fleet commander, he acted in the role of one, duplicating in many ways the activities of colonels and generals in the ground forces, who at this same time were negotiating with Japanese garrison commanders in the major cities of Manchuria. This political dimension is a startling addition to the repertoire of the unit.

A variety of means were used to insert and extract the detachments. In terms of frequency, the fast boat was probably the most common, generally patrol torpedo boats, but also other small coastal craft. Leonov's detachment developed a close association with two boat commanders in particular, Sr. Lt. B. M. Lyakh, who commanded a small subchaser (MO-423), and Capt. Lt. A. O. Shabalin, who commanded a patrol torpedo boat detachment. All the landings in northern Korea employed fast boats. Other delivery means included walking, skiing, parachuting, and landing of amphibious aircraft on lakes. Some of Leonov's men jumped into the Varanger Peninsula in October 1944, and one of the three-man teams jumped into the Varanger Peninsula in the spring of 1944. The submarine was also used, particularly in conjunction with the three-man teams in Norway.

The personnel of the reconnaissance detachments were a mixed lot, drawn primarily from the fleet. That many of them were athletes has already been mentioned, but merits elaboration. Several members of the detachment were superior athletes in their sport, be it cross-country skiing, swimming, boxing, or martial arts. Viktor Leonov, the detachment commander from 1943, before entering service in 1937 was a parachutist, boxer, and crosscountry skier.<sup>95</sup> Vladimir Olyashev was a champion of the Soviet Union and Merited Master of Sport in skiing.<sup>96</sup> Inzartsev, the physical training director of the fleet submarine brigade and later commander of the detachment, was the fleet weight-lifting champion in his class.<sup>97</sup> Ivan Lysenko, a radio operator in the Northern Fleet detachment, was a wrestling champion.<sup>98</sup> Ivan Guznenkov, the detachment political officer in 1944-45, was a competitive rock climber and martial arts fighter.<sup>99</sup> These and other examples illustrate that athletic prowess was an important selection criteria for personnel in the detachments.<sup>100</sup> They make credible the currently-held belief that Soviet special operations forces recruit among Olympic-class athletes.

A second, and equally important personal attribute for assignment to the reconnaissance detachment, was political loyalty. Leonov, Babikov, and others repeatedly emphasize the high percentage of detachment personnel who were members of the Komsomol or Communist Party. Both the larger detachment and the mixed Norwegian-Soviet platoon had political officers, whose principal responsibility was to foster and maintain loyalty of the men to the Soviet state, the Communist Party, and most immediately, to the unit and mission. The reconnaissance detachment political officer participated in all combat operations behind German lines. The experience of the joint operation with an army reconnaissance unit, where a soldier deserted to the Germans near the objective area, proved the need for political screening and indoctrination.

After he took command of the detachment in late 1943, Leonov personally conducted this screening.<sup>101</sup> He paid special attention to the candidate's combat skills, morale, will, self control, discipline, ability to obey orders, acceptance of personal responsibility for accomplishment of the mission, comradeship, and teamwork. After interviewing each candidate, Leonov had the final authority to accept or reject their application for a position in his detachment.

Another critical skill in these units was foreign language proficiency. In some cases, such as with the Norwegian nationals, it came with the personnel. But when it did not, Soviet personnel were brought in who possessed foreign language skills. Examples were the female medic who spoke Finnish, Major Dobrotin who spoke German, and the political officer for the mixed Norwegian-Soviet platoon who spoke several languages. In the Pacific Fleet detachment, interpreters who spoke Korean and Japanese were attached to the force for all four landings.

Although it has been mentioned already in connection with the language skills, the employment of foreign nationals is significant. Norwegian communists fleeing the German occupation brought with them a knowledge of the terrain, locales, and customs that few Soviet citizens could possess.<sup>102</sup> In the Far East, it is possible that the Soviet covert agents which were inserted into Unggi and Ch'ongjin were also foreign nationals, and thus able to maintain cover in the Korean/Japanese population.

Thus far, the analysis has focused on what occurred during the war. To truly measure the impact of the lessons of these war-time experiences on Soviet post-war special operations doctrine and force structure, however, one would have to know far more than is now known about the post-war careers of the key personnel. Twice Hero of the Soviet Union Viktor Leonov attended Kirov Caspian Naval School in 1950, and in 1956 was an instructor at the Voroshilov Naval Academy. He retired from active service in July 1956, just before his fortieth birthday. Leonov is known to have played a role in the establishment of Soviet ground forces' special purpose force in the early 1960's.<sup>103</sup> As of this writing he is seventy-three years old and living in Moscow.

Hero of the Soviet Union Makar Babikov left active service in 1946 and returned to his native Komi region. There he was secretary of a city party committee, and then deputy to a member of the autonomous republic's Council of Ministers. After serving in state security, Babikov worked for a time in the bureaucracy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and subsequently for the Council of Ministers of RSFSR. His photograph recently appeared in *Morskoy sbornik* [Naval proceedings] on the occasion of a veterans' conference.<sup>104</sup> Of the other officers, it is known only that in the mid-fifties, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Dobrotin was out of the navy and living in Moscow, while Inzartsev still served in the Northern Fleet.<sup>105</sup>

Consider this thought, however. Between them Leonov and Babikov have written some 1100 pages of memoirs, which are freely exploitable by anyone who reads Russian. How much more information exists in the form of unit records, after-action reports, classified studies, oral histories, and debriefings, which have been used by Soviet analysts to develop special operations theoretical, doctrinal, and organizational models? Until the spirit of *glasnost* opens these and other heretofore inaccessible sources to Western view, Soviet memoirs and secondary literature, supplemented by brief excerpts from German military records, will constitute the only historical record of the combat actions of Soviet naval special purpose forces in the Second World War.

## ENDNOTES

1. See, for example, Marc J. Berkowitz, "Soviet Naval Spetsnaz Forces" in *Naval War College Review*, Spring 1988: 5—21; James Adams, "Soviet Special Forces in America: The Day Before" in *Orbis*, Spring 1988: 199—215; and Lynn M. Hansen, *Soviet Navy Spetsnaz Operations on the Northern Flank: Implications for the Defense of Western Europe*, The Center for Strategic Technology, Texas A&M University, April 1984.
2. The best description of German operations in this theater throughout the entire war is in Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 20-271, "The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940—1945", by Earl F. Ziemke, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), hereafter cited as DA Pam 20-271.
3. Golovko's meeting with Vizgin is described in M. A. Babikov, *Letom sorok pervogo* [The summer of forty-one], (Moscow: "Sovetskaya Rossiya", 1980), 67—68. This work will hereafter be cited as Babikov, *Letom*.
4. Babikov, *Letom*, 69. Vizgin is mentioned in a recent article as one of the "leaders and chiefs of intelligence organs" in the Soviet Navy during World War II. See Yu. Kvyatkovskiy, "Bespokoynaya vakhta razvedki VMF" [Troubled watch of naval intelligence], *Morskoy sbornik* [Naval proceedings], No. 10, 1988: 13—14.
5. Babikov, *Letom*, 110.
6. *Ibid.*, 111.
7. *Ibid.*, 199; according to Babikov, the rank "Intendant" was frequently given to accomplished athletes. Historically, however, holders of this rank generally served in rear support elements. V. N. Leonov briefly describes Inzartsev in *Litsom k litsu* [Face to face] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1957), 15, hereafter cited as Leonov, *Litsom*.
8. Leonov describes his recruitment in *Litsom*, 4—5.
9. Leonov mentions her in *Litsom*, 21; see also Babikov, *Letom*, 204.
10. *Ibid.*, 200.
11. This mission is described in Babikov, *Letom*, 186—194; and Leonov, *Litsom*, 10—14. A German document dated 24 July 1941 briefly mentions this raid, fixing the date of the actual attack to 22 July. See *Kriegstagebuch* [War Diary] Nr. 1, AOK 20 [Headquarters, 20th German Army], "Aktennotiz" [Memorandum], microfilm series T-312, roll 1647, frame 001173, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., hereafter cited as NARA.
12. The raid itself is described in Babikov, *Letom*, chapter XXII, and Leonov, *Litsom*, 22—27.
13. Babikov, *Letom*, 219—223.
14. Viktor Leonov, already an experienced skier, spent some time at the ski base while recovering from his wounds. See Leonov, *Litsom*, 32—33. According to Babikov, Leonov was responsible at this time for procurement of the detachment's special winter clothing. See Babikov, *Letom*, 253.
15. Babikov mentions parachute training in connection with the Norwegians who were being prepared for coast-watching duty in Norway. See M. A. Babikov, *Otryad osobogo naznacheniya* [Special purpose detachment] (Moscow: "Sovetskaya Rossiya" 1986), 105 and 159, hereafter cited as Babikov, *Otryad*. As for the personnel of the larger reconnaissance detachment, Leonov clearly indicates that day and night parachute jumping was part of the regular training regime. See V. N. Leonov, *Gotov'sya k podvigu* [Prepare for an heroic deed], (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo DOSAAF, 1985), 25—26, hereafter cited as Leonov, *Gotov'sya*.
16. Babikov, *Letom*, 254—74. This action is recorded in German records as follows: "Yesterday evening a deserter appeared south of Luostari Airfield, who declared himself to be a member of a reconnaissance and partisan detachment which was advancing south of Luostari Airfield, and had the mission to attack the airfield and destroy everything." See KTB Nr. 1, AOK 20, "Fernspruch Gebirgs Korps

Norwegen [Telephone message Mountain Corps Norway] Ic 1.9.1941 1745 hours", microfilm series T-312, roll 1013, frame 9209088, NARA. Based on this incident, and the interrogation of the deserter, a reconnaissance detachment was added to the Soviet order of battle by German intelligence analysts: "Aufklarungs Abteilung: (Partisanen-Abt.) Gesamtstärke etwa 300 Mann, davon etwa 200 Matrosen." [Reconnaissance detachment: (Partisan detachment.) total strength about 300 men, of which approximately 200 are sailors.] See KTB 1, AOK 20, "Vermutliche Feindkräfte vor Gesamtraum des A.O.K. Norwegen Stand 5.9.1941" [Probable enemy strength in the operating area of A.O.K. Norway as of 5.9.1941], microfilm series T-312, roll 1013, frame 9207906, NARA.

17. DA Pamphlet 20-271, Chapter 8, contains a good account of this period in English. For a Soviet perspective, see N. Rumiantsev, *Oboronitel'nyye deystviya 14-i armii v Zapolyar'ye v 1941 godu* [Defensive operations of the 14th army in the Transpolar in 1941], *Voyenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* No. 12, (1980):21—33, and Rumiantsev, *Razгром vraga v Zapolyar'ye (1941—1944 gg.)* [Defeat of the enemy in the Transpolar (1941—1944)], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), chapter 3.

18. Babikov, *Letom*, 305.

19. Babikov, *Otryad*, 6.

20. The account of this operation begins in Babikov, *Otryad*, chapter V, and concludes in chapter VIII.

21. *Ibid.*, 37.

22. *Ibid.*, 32. Babikov makes a veiled reference to "colleagues in Murmansk", implying that another organization besides the Northern Fleet had an interest in this operation. On 58, Babikov indicates that the planned landing of a follow-on force was cancelled.

23. *Ibid.*, 102.

24. At least one of the radio operators was involved in an operation with the larger reconnaissance detachment in November, 1941 suggesting some personnel mobility between the two elements. The designation of a platoon commander, a deputy commander for political affairs, a separate communications staff and facility, and the distinct nature of their mission lead this author to conclude that by January 1942 this platoon was not a subset of the larger reconnaissance detachment, but a separate element under the fleet staff intelligence section. A German intelligence assessment from February 1943 supports this analysis. The document describes the "Kundschafter (und Ablenkungs-) Abteilung der Nordmeerflotte" [intelligence (and diversionary) department of the northern fleet] as containing two separate elements, one for operations in rear areas, the other only for operations in Norway. This document also correctly identifies Vizgin as the chief of the intelligence department of the fleet and Dubrotin as his deputy. See *Oberkommando der 20. (Geb.) Armee Abt. Ic Az. A 8 Nr. 810/4*, 22.2.1943, Annex 3, "Bandentätigkeit und Organisation vor (Geb.) A.O.K. 20" [Band activities and organization in front of 20th Mountain Army], microfilm series T-312, roll 1649, frames 001328-29, NARA.

25. Babikov, *Otryad*, 104. According to Babikov, Krymova was a language and area specialist, who had lived in Sweden and Norway before the war. She was fluent in all the Scandinavian languages, plus English, French, and German. Leonov, in *Litsom*, 82, indicates that Sutyagin also spoke Norwegian.

26. Babikov, *Otryad*, 103—05.

27. *Ibid.*, chapter XXV.

28. *Ibid.*, chapter XVIII.

29. The captain of the submarine, Kovalenko, was pulled out of the water by the crew of the German minesweeper which had rammed his boat. His foot had apparently become caught in the hatch. This account does not indicate the severity of his injury. See Friedrich Ruge, *The Soviets as Naval Opponents 1941—1945* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1979) 154—55.

30. The account of this incident concludes in Babikov, *Otryad*, chapter XXI, with no definitive statement of the fate of these men.

31. *Ibid.*, beginning in chapter XVIII and concluding in chapter XXI.

32. *Ibid.*, chapter XXI.

33. *Ibid.*, 171.

34. A German document dated 27 September 1942 notes that two Russian agents with a transmitter were inserted by submarine north of Tromsø and subsequently captured. See *Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Norwegen Ia/O.Qu/Qu 2/Ic/Ao Nr. 951/42*, "Befehl für den Schutz von Wehrwirtschaftsbetrieben" [Order for the defense of military-industrial facilities], Annex 1, microfilm series T-312, roll 1648, frame 000903, NARA.

35. An extraordinary German document describes the mixed Soviet-Norwegian platoon and its activities. It contains the names of Capt. 2d Rank Vizgin, as well as eleven Norwegians who belonged to the group (six of the Norwegian names can also be found in Babikov, *Otryad*). See *Oberkommando der 20. (Gebirgs-) Armee Ic/AO Tgb.Nr.96/43*, 19 November 1943, "Sowjetrussische Spionagetätigkeit im Varanger-Raum" [Soviet-Russian espionage activity in the Varanger area], microfilm series T-312 roll 1651, frames 000682—89, NARA. (For a complete translation of this document, see the Documents section of this issue.) Another document summarizes the November 1943 report and adds a brief account of December 1943 incidents. See *Oberkommando der 20. (Gebirgs-) Armee Ic/AO Tgb. Nr. 136/44*, 22 August 1944, "Tätigkeitsbericht der Abt. Ic/AO (Abwehroffizier III) beim Oberkommando der 20. (Gebirgs-) Armee, Zeit: 1.7.—31.12.1943" [Activity report of section Ic/AO (Abwehr officer III) of high command of 20th Mountain Army for the period 1 July—31 December 1943], paragraph V.1.C. (Tätigkeit des sowjetrussischen militärischen und zivilen Nachrichtendienstes in der Berichtszeit) [Activities of soviet russian military and civilian intelligence services in the reporting period], microfilm series T-312, roll 1651, relevant passages in frames 000562—64, NARA.

36. M. A. Babikov, *Morskiye razvedchiki* [Naval scouts], (Syktyvkar: Komi knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1966), 12—14, hereafter cited as Babikov, *Morskije*. According to Leonov, this team was inserted by parachute and extracted by patrol torpedo boat. See Leonov, *Gotov'sya*, 17—19.

37. Babikov, *Otryad*, chapter IX. Leonov, *Gotov'sya*, 84—88, indicates that this mission was conducted on the night of 6—7 November, with a naval infantry reconnaissance company.

38. Several German documents describe this raid, and establish the time of the attack as 0200 hours 25 October. See KTB 1, AOK 20, morning reports, evening reports, and teletype messages, series T-312, microfilm roll 1013, frames 9208536—38, 9208836, 9208852, -54, -57, and 59—60, NARA.

39. Babikov, *Otryad*, 83.

40. *Ibid.*, chapter XI.

41. *Ibid.*, 84.

42. *Ibid.*, chapter XII.



43. *Ibid.*, chapter XIII.
44. According to a German report, "Russian reconnaissance troops have been repeatedly identified in German uniforms and with German weapons. . . . In one action on the Litsa Front, the enemy took the uniforms off of German prisoners and casualties for the purpose of equipping partisans [*banden*]." See *Armeeoberkommando Norwegen Ic Nr. 1080/42*, 14 November 1942, "Feindnachrichtenblatt Nr. 24, Stand: 14. November 1942" [Enemy information report Nr. 24, as of 14 November 1942], microfilm series T-312, roll 1649, frame 000201, NARA.
45. Babikov, *Otryad*, chapter XVI.
46. *Ibid.*, chapter XVII.
47. *Ibid.*, chapter XIX.
48. *Ibid.*, chapter XX.
49. Babikov, *Otryad*, chapter XXII. A detailed description of this offensive from the Soviet perspective is contained in Rumiantsev, *Razgrom vraga*, chapter 3; and from the German perspective in DA Pamphlet 20-271, 223—28.
50. DA Pamphlet 20-271, map 19, shows the axis of the 12th Naval Infantry Brigade, but not the reconnaissance detachment. A better map can be found in Rumiantsev, *Razgrom vraga*, 69. Babikov discusses this action in *Otryad*, chapter XXII, and Leonov in *Litsom*, 36—48.
51. Babikov, *Otryad*, chapter XXIII.
52. *Ibid.*, chapter XXIV; Babikov, *Morskie*, 14—16; Leonov, *Litsom*, 60—74. S. I. Kabanov describes this action from the perspective of the naval infantry in *Pole boya—bereg* [The field of battle is the shore] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1977), 89—99. (Kabanov commanded the Northern Defensive Region 1942—44.)
53. Leonov describes this ceremony in *Litsom*, 75—77.
54. *Ibid.*, 82. Babikov identified the location in Na vostochnom beregu [On the eastern shore] (Moscow: "Sovetskaya Rossiya" 1969), 7, hereafter cited as Babikov, *Na vostochnom*. The historical record of the detachment between October 1942 and October 1944 is not well-defined. Both Leonov and Babikov wrote with less specificity as to dates and locations of combat actions.
55. Neither Leonov nor Babikov indicate when the detachment returned from the training base in the White Sea to their deployment base in Polyarnyy. Leonov discusses these initial operations in *Litsom*, beginning on 82, and in *Gotov'sya*, 57—58.
56. For the German account of this raid, see "Fernschreiben" [teleprinter] 1.1.1944, microfilm series T-312, roll 1650, frame 000462, NARA. According to the German report, the lighthouse operator was abducted on 15 December, and the road ambush was executed against four Luftwaffe vehicles on 21 December 1943.
57. Leonov, *Litsom*, beginning on 87.
58. *Ibid.*, beginning on 90.
59. Leonov, *Gotov'sya*, 53—55.
60. *Ibid.*, 68—70.
61. Babikov, *Morskie*, 17—18.
62. Leonov, *Litsom*, 94.
63. See James F. Gebhardt, "The Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation, 7—30 October 1944: A Soviet Joint and Combined Arms Operation on Arctic Terrain", *Journal of Soviet Military Studies*, Volume 2, No. 1.
64. Several eyewitness accounts of this raid are available. See Leonov, *Litsom*, 105—134; Leonov, *Gotov'sya*, 90-102; Leonov, "Vperedsmotryashchiye" [The lookouts], in *Cherez fiordy* [Through the fjords] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969), 170—74; I. P. Barchenko-Emel'ianov, *Frontovyye budni rybach'ego* [Days at the front on the Rubachyi Peninsula], (Murmansk: Knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1984); and A. N. Sintsov, "Shturm krestovogo" [The storming of Krestovyy] in *Eto bylo na kraynem severe* [It was in the far north] (Murmansk: Knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1965), 215—21.
65. See KTB Nr. 5, AOK 20, Anlage 2, Daily report, to the entry of 12 October 1944, microfilm series T-312, roll 1063, frame 9265168, NARA.
66. See Leonov, *Litsom*, 128—31; Leonov, "Vperedsmotryashchiye", 174—78; and Babikov, *Morskie*, 20—40.
67. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 6 and 17. The existence of a reconnaissance detachment in the Amur River flotilla can be established from *Geroi sovetskogo soyuza: Kratkiy biograficheskii slovar'* [Heroes of the soviet union: short biographical dictionary], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), 805. The entry for S. M. Kuznetsov lists him as "commander, 71st Special Purpose Detachment [*otryad osobogo naznacheniya*] of the Amur river flotilla."
68. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 6. This section will rely principally on Babikov's 1969 book, the best and most detailed account of the detachment's activities in the Far East. Babikov's earlier book, *Morskie*, also contains many relevant passages, as do Leonov's two memoirs, *Litsom* and *Gotov'sya*.
69. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 26—28.
70. *Ibid.*, 37—62. All four landing sites have both Japanese and Korean names, as follows: Iuki—Unggi; Rasin—Najin; Seisin—Ch'ongjin; and Genzan—Wonsan. This paper will use the Korean names.
71. L. N. Vnotchenko, *Pobeda na Dal'nem Vostoke* [Victory in the Far East] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971), 270.
72. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 47.
73. *Ibid.*, 52.
74. *Ibid.*, 60.
75. *Ibid.*, 63.
76. *Ibid.*, 92.
77. Two Soviet sources have maps of the combat in Ch'ongjin (Seisin): V. I. Achkasov, et al., *Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939—1945* [History of the Second World War 1939—1945], vol. 11 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1980), following 256; and S. E. Zakharov et al., *Krasnoznamennyy tikhookeanskii flot* [Red banner pacific fleet] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), 185.
78. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 122.
79. *Ibid.*, 157.
80. *Ibid.*, 166.
81. *Ibid.*, 195.

82. Babikov discusses the events in Wonsan in *Na vostochnom*, 194—231, and in *Morskie*, 88—109. Leonov gives his account in *Gotov'sya*, 38—49.
83. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 217.
84. Leonov, *Gotov'sya*, 42—44.
85. *Ibid.*, 45—47.
86. Babikov, *Na vostochnom*, 227.
87. *Ibid.*, 233. Zakharov, et al., *Krasnoznamennyy tikhookeanskii flot*, 296, indicates that this designation was granted on 26 August 1945.
88. Babikov, *Morskie*, 4; in Russian: 4-i *Osobyi dobrovol'cheskiy otryad moryakov*.
89. Babikov, *Letom*, 251.
90. I. A. Kozlov and V. S. Shlomin, *Krasnoznamennyy severnyy flot* [Red banner northern fleet], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1983), 272.
91. *Geroi sovetskogo soyuza: kratkiy biograficheskii slovar'*, 27, entry for S. M. Agafonov.
92. *Ibid.*, 862, entry for V. N. Leonov.
93. In Russian: *razvedotryad osobogo naznacheniya Severnogo flota*, in V. Sadovskiy, "Komandir 'chernykh d'yavolov'" [Commander of the 'black devils'], *Sovetskiy voyn* [Soviet soldier], No. 3 (1985), 36—37.
94. A careful search of the British official history, Capt. S. W. Roskill, *The War At Sea 1939—1945* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1954 and 1956), volumes I and II, does not reveal any sharing of intelligence data, however.
95. E. Nikitin, "Podvig, voshedshiy v serdtsa i istoriyu" [A feat, which has entered into the heart and into history], *Morskoy sbornik* [Naval Proceedings], No. 5 (1987):63.
96. Leonov, *Gotov'sya*, 46; Merited Master of Sport in Russian: *zasluzhennyy master sporta*.
97. Leonov, *Litsom*, 15.
98. *Ibid.*, 79.
99. *Ibid.*, 102.
100. The recruitment of athletes was also important for special operations units of Soviet ground forces during World War II. See F. L. Kurlat and L. A. Studnikov, "Brigada osobogo naznacheniya" [Special purpose brigade], *Voprosy istorii* [Questions of history], September 1982:95—104; and S. Kh. Aganov, ed., *Inzhenernyye voyska sovetskoy armii 1918—1945* [Engineer troops of the soviet army 1918—1945], (Moscow: Voynizdat, 1985), 459—63, a section which discusses engineer units employed for special operations behind German lines.
101. Nikitin, "Podvig", 62.
102. At least one of these Norwegians worked for Soviet intelligence after World War II. Selmer Nilsen, a member of the mixed Soviet-Norwegian platoon in 1943, assisted the Soviets in tracking the flights of the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft into the airfield at Bodo in 1960. See P. E. Vatne, *Jeg Var Russisk Spion-Historien om Selmer' Nilsen* [I was a Russian spy—the story of Selmer Nilsen], (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1981).
103. Interview with former Soviet soldier, summer of 1987.
104. A. Danilin, "Ne stareyut dyshoy veterany" [The veterans are not aging in spirit], *Morskoy sbornik* [Naval proceedings], No. 5 (1988):16—18.
105. Leonov, *Litsom*, 150.